

NEWS RELEASE

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Utah Company Expands to Manufacture Military Uniforms
Navasew to Employ Up to 100 in Southeastern Utah

Montezuma Creek, Utah – A small Utah sewing plant in southeastern Utah is expanding its workforce to make military uniforms for the U.S. government. Navasew, a limited liability company located on the Navajo Reservation in Utah, is working with private and government partners to create up to 85 new jobs in rural Utah, bringing its total workforce up to 100 employees. The company has landed a sub-contract to produce tops for the new Army Combat Uniform at its facility in Montezuma Creek.

“Utah is excited to add these stable jobs to our workforce, especially in an area of the state that has 40 percent unemployment,” says Utah Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. “This is a great example of a partnership between public and private entities.”

The estimated annual revenue will be in excess of \$4.5 million, which includes materials costs. The wages paid to local workers annually is estimated at \$1.5 million.

“This is economic development for the local community,” says Kenneth Maryboy, delegate for the Navajo Nation Council who explains local leaders have been trying to figure out for years what they can do for single mothers.

“This contract is a great example of the federal procurement process and how it can benefit small businesses in Utah,” says Fred Lange, director of the Utah’s procurement program, which is part of the Governor’s Office of Economic Development.

Navasew, founded in December 2003, originally employed 13 people who have been sewing Navy dress uniform skirts. A majority of the company is owned by the employees who are mostly women. The company is in the process of hiring and plans to be in full production in August 2005.

“People available for employment are wonderful,” says Dick Chase, plant manager and co-owner of Tennessee-based Omega Apparel, a minority owner of Navasew. “They are industrious, hard-working and highly-skilled.” He explains that the company hires employees who are anxious to learn and want to do something as part of a group.

Other partners involved in the contract include: the Navajo Nation; the ICA Group, a not-for-profit consulting and venture development organization based in Brookline, MA; Tullahoma Industries, Tullahoma, TN; USDA/Rocky Mountain Regional Development Agency; the Utah Navajo Trust; the Governor’s Office of Economic

Development; and the Custom Fit training program. Under the new contract, Navasew plans to make 171,000 garments per year over the next five years. The new Utah-made tops will hit the military market in October.

According to Chuck Spence, deputy procurement director for the state, Navasew plans to expand its operations to include a cutting room floor, a storage facility, and a shipping dock. The state also will assist Navasew in obtaining its Small Business Administration 8(a) certification that will increase the company's likelihood of receiving federal procurement opportunities.

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